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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009

Programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007

Report of the Human Rights Council

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Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.84

Twenty-seventh report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly (A/C.5/62/12) on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.84 entitled "Report of the Human Rights Council". During its consideration of the statement, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification.

2. In its resolution 60/251, the General Assembly decided to establish the Human Rights Council, based in Geneva, in replacement of the Commission on Human Rights as a subsidiary organ of the Assembly and decided, inter alia, that the Council should undertake a universal periodic review, based on objective and reliable information, of the fulfilment by each State of its human rights obligations and commitments and assume, review and, where necessary, improve and rationalize all mandates, mechanisms, functions and responsibilities of the Commission, in order to maintain a system of special procedures, expert advice and a complaint procedure. The Assembly also decided that the Council should meet regularly throughout the year and schedule no fewer than three sessions per year, including a main session, for a total duration of no less than 10 weeks, and should be able to hold special sessions, when needed, at the request of a member of the Council with the support of one third of the membership of the Council.

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II. Statement of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.84

3. Under the terms of draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.84, the General Assembly would, inter alia, endorse the decision of the Human Rights Council to adopt its resolution 5/1. In that resolution, the Council established the modalities for a universal periodic review mechanism, special procedures, the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee and a complaint procedure. Details concerning the requests contained in the draft resolution are set out in paragraphs 7 to 10 of the statement.

4. As indicated in paragraph 12 of the statement, overall additional requirements arising from the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 are estimated at $8,147,600 for the biennium 2008-2009, as follows: $3,847,300 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the proposed programme budget; $3,149,000 under section 23, Human rights; $353,700 under section 27, Public information; $349,500 under section 28E, Administration, Geneva; and $448,100 under section 35, Staff assessment, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment. The estimates contained in the statement constitute requirements over and above the provisions already made in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 and the report of the Secretary-General on revised estimates related to unforeseen and extraordinary expenses arising from the implementation of decisions of the Human Rights Council (A/62/125). As indicated in paragraph 14 of the statement, additional resources that will arise for the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 will be absorbed within available resources approved for that biennium.

A. Additional requirements by programme budget section

Section 2. General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management

5. Additional requirements arising from the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 under section 2 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 amount to $3,487,300. The requirement is for temporary assistance for meetings for the servicing of six weeks of meetings annually of the universal periodic review mechanism working group, for a total of 60 meetings per year, with interpretation services in the six official languages and pre-session, in-session and post-session documentation to be translated into the six languages. Details are provided in paragraphs 15 to 18 of the statement.

6. In paragraphs 8 and 9 of its report on revised estimates (A/62/7/Add.25), the Advisory Committee has recommended approval of additional conference-servicing capacity relating to requirements of the Human Rights Council, namely a team of 20 interpreters and temporary assistance funding for Senior Revisers equivalent to 5 P-5 positions. **It appears to the Committee that this additional capacity could help to offset requirements to cover the meetings referred to in paragraphs 15 to 18 of the statement. Furthermore, the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 provides for temporary assistance for meetings in Geneva.**

For these reasons, the Committee is of the opinion that no net additional resource requirements should arise for temporary assistance for meetings under section 2.

Section 23. Human rights

7. Additional requirements of $3,149,000 are requested under section 23 for 18 new posts ($3,054,000) and furniture and equipment relating to the proposed new posts ($95,000). As indicated in paragraph 23 of the statement, it is estimated, on the basis of the estimated workload statistics of the newly mandated universal review mechanism, that 21 posts would be required at the P-4 level. However, on the basis of an assessment that some of the work can be undertaken by other branches within the organizational structure of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) through the use of existing resources, a total of 17 new P-4 posts is proposed. The new posts are requested in order to ensure the preparation of relevant documents for the review of each country during the sessions of the universal periodic review working group, as well as to provide support to the rapporteurs in their review and preparation of the reports of the country groups. It is expected that 48 countries will be reviewed per year. The functions of the P-4 posts are described in paragraph 24 of the statement. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was provided with an analysis of the estimated workload for the completion of a universal periodic review for one country.

8. The Advisory Committee appreciates the effort made by the Secretary-General to quantify the workload entailed in the universal periodic review process. However the Committee notes, as indicated in paragraph 2 of the statement, that the Human Rights Council is expected to continue into 2008 its review of the existing special mandates, which it began in September 2007. The Committee also notes, as indicated in paragraph 20, that, in the light of the continuing review by the Council of its subsidiary machinery in response to General Assembly resolution 60/251, a consolidated statement of requirements arising from the continuing review and of potential absorptive capacity would be provided to the Assembly.

9. **The Advisory Committee recognizes that support for the universal periodic review process is a significant new function for the Office. While it appreciates the workload analysis that has been done, the precise determination of requirements can only be known in the light of experience. The Committee believes that the universal periodic review team should be substantially assisted by the geographic and other relevant units of OHCHR. Furthermore, the Committee points out that the existing staff of OHCHR involved in supporting the current special mandate process may become available for the universal periodic review once the process of reviewing existing special mandates mentioned in paragraph 8 above is complete. With these considerations in mind, the Advisory Committee recommends, at this time, the establishment of 12 P-4 posts.**

10. The establishment of a P-3 post is proposed to handle the development, maintenance and periodic updating of a public list of candidates for positions of special procedures mandate holders, as well as the establishment of a selection procedure for special procedures mandate holders (see A/C.5/62/12, paras. 26 and 27). The requirement to identify and select candidates is not a new one. **The Advisory Committee considers that the additional tasks provided for in Human**

Rights Council resolution 5/1 should be accommodated within the current capacity of OHCHR. The Committee therefore recommends against approval of the proposed P-3 post.

Section 27. Public information

11. Additional resources amounting to $353,700 are requested under section 27 for press, radio, television and photographic coverage of the additional meetings that will be required for the universal periodic review mechanism ($194,500) and webcasting of the meetings ($159,200). **The Advisory Committee is of the opinion that no net additional requirements should arise under section 27.**

Section 28E. Administration, Geneva

12. Additional resources in the amount of $349,500 are requested under section 28E as follows: (a) $39,100 under other staff costs to cover the cost of sound technicians and provide the necessary services for meeting rooms for the additional six weeks of meetings relating to the universal periodic review mechanism; and (b) $310,400 to cover the cost of office space and telecommunications equipment for the 18 new posts proposed under section 23.

13. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, on the basis of the latest understanding by the United Nations Office at Geneva that, in fact, no rental of extra space would be required, the amount of $276,000 for the cost of premises for 18 new posts would not be required. Therefore the estimates for common support costs could be reduced by $276,000. **Moreover, concerning the remaining estimated additional requirements, the Committee is of the opinion that no net additional requirements should arise under section 28E.**

B. Conclusion

14. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that should it adopt draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.84, an additional appropriation of $2,420,000 would be required in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009, as follows: $2,117,600 under section 23, Human rights, and $302,400 under section 35, Staff assessment, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment. Under the procedures established by the Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 and 42/211, those resource requirements would represent a charge against the contingency fund.**

15. **As indicated in paragraphs 6, 11 and 13 above, no net additional requirements should arise under sections 2, 27 and 28E.**